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Preface

We cannot predict the future. However, we can forecast future behavior quantitatively by formulating probability models. A stochastic process is a set of outcomes of a random experiment indexed by time, and is one of the key tools with which to analyze future behavior quantitatively. Stochastic modeling plays a crucial role in business and industry since uncertainity is one of the major factors in the real world. Many stochastic models can be applied for analyzing future behavior quantitatively.

The International Conference on Applied Stochastic System Modeling (ASSM 2000) was held in Kyoto, Japan, March 29–30, 2000. ASSM 2000 was devoted to the presentation of stochastic models that are highly useful in the real world applications from both theoretical and practical viewpoints. After the conference, I asked all the authors to submit their papers, and compiled this special issue after the papers were subjected to a rigorous reviewing and screening process. I greatly appreciate the cooperation by all the authors and many anonymous referees.

Since the papers included in this special issue cover quite a range of theoretical and applied topics, I took an easy arrangement of all the papers in alphabetical order based on the surname of the principal author rather than grouping into different areas.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor E. Y. Rodin, Editor-in-Chief, *Computers and Mathematics with Applications*, for his kindness and patience. I also would like to express my sincere appreciation to my former colleagues, Professor T. Dohi, Dr. T. Satow, and Dr. H. Okamura, Hiroshima University, Japan, for their continual support from initial planning to final editing. ASSM 2000 was sponsored by the Operations Research Society of Japan.

Shunji Osaki
Guest Editor

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